

L. S. KrestyanovaUral Federal University named after the First Russian President B. N. Yeltsin
(Ekaterinburg, Russian Federation; e-mail: gosslugashiy@yandex.ru)

INTERETHNIC RELATIONS AND MIGRATION PROCESSES ON THE REGIONAL LEVEL: CURRENT ISSUES AND TRENDS¹

The article discusses the issues and trends of interethnic relations on the regional level. We suppose that migration processes have a direct influence upon them. Our hypothesis is that interethnic relations between the communities that traditionally reside in a specific region are fundamentally different from those established by recent migrants. For the former, the role of ethnicity is less important while the priority is given to the civil identity, which leads to the formation of supraethnic integrative images, mitigating interethnic conflicts. For the latter category of communities, the ethno-cultural boundaries are still strong, ethnic identity is prioritized and interethnic tension is aggravated by language and social barriers. We believe that when the regional authorities are seeking to harmonize interethnic relations, they are making a fundamental mistake by focusing on the first category of ethnic groups and ignoring the second. Interethnic tension mostly results from migration and the negative public perception of migrants, which causes a number of social and psychological problems. Our analysis explores the key factors shaping the attitude towards migrants and thus, creating interethnic tensions. We carried out a questionnaire survey in 2011 and also analyzed the results of the surveys conducted between 2008 and 2015, censuses and analytical reports on migration. Regional authorities may benefit from the results of our research by modifying their national and migration policies. This study may also be useful to other governmental agencies engaged in social and economic forecasting, especially concerning social tensions in the region.

Keywords: interethnic relations, migration, ethnic community, integrative image, interethnic tension, regional level, civil identity, supraethnic image, ethnic barriers, cultural barriers

Introduction

Interethnic relations are vitally important for regional communities because they can have a significant impact on the social prosperity of the region.

Sverdlovsk region is a multi-ethnic region with dynamic commercial, social and cultural life. It is one of the largest by population and has a developed industrial economy. It reflects the general trends in the whole country, which makes it worthy of scholarly attention.

We can prevent interethnic tensions and create equal conditions for citizens of various ethnic backgrounds only if we gain in-depth knowledge of the underlying causes of interethnic conflicts and study the main trends in the development of ethnic groups.

The ethnic composition of Sverdlovsk region has a complex structure and social stratification. Thus, the situation in the region to a great extent depends on migration and social adaptation of migrants, the involvement of various ethnic groups into social, economic, political and other processes.

The largest ethnic communities in the Sverdlovsk region are as follows: Russians, 3,684,843 (90.6 %); Tatars, 143,803 (3.5 %); Ukrainians, 35,563 (0.87 %); Bashkirs, 31,183 (0.77 %); Mari, 23,801 (0.59 %); Germans, 14,914 (0.37 %); Azerbaijanis, 14,215 (0.35 %); Udmurts, 13,789 (0.34 %); Belarusians, 11,670 (0.29 %); Armenians, 11,501 (0.28 %); and Tajiks, 11,138 (0.27 %)². The pie chart in Figure 1 illustrates the ethnic composition of the region.

Therefore, we can identify trends characterizing the ethnic communities indigenous to this region and those of the new ethnic groups.

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

Since we apply a constructivist approach as the main methodological paradigm of this research, we define an ethnic community as a social community which has a specific name and distinctive culture

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² All-Russia Population Census 2010. Retrieved from: http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis_itogi1612.htm (date of access: 01.08.2015).



Fig.1. Largest ethnic communities of Sverdlovsk region

and whose members have memories of a shared historical past and common ancestry and associate themselves with a specific area. Therefore, their sense of solidarity is based on the cultural (ethnic) self-identification in relation to other ethnic communities with which they are maintaining long-term and stable relationships.

Interethnic relations are defined as a complex of relations between ethnic communities. Such relations are constructed by external and internal subjects of relationships and social institutions in the process of their political, economic, cultural and other activities.

Many ethnic groups in the Sverdlovsk region developed throughout centuries as ethnic and cultural communities of Russia and played an important role in the history of Russian statehood. These can be classified as traditional ethnic communities of the region. Nevertheless, these communities are not static social structures, they are constantly changing in size, not only because of the natural population decline and growth, because of migration processes, but also their changing ethnic identities.

The category of 'supraethnic community' plays a significant role in this process. It is a stable integrative social community which unites representatives of constituent ethnic communities through cultural, social, economic and other characteristics.

The other category is comprised by migrant ethnic communities. The Sverdlovsk region is one of the main host regions for labour migration. According to the number of registered migrants, the Sverdlovsk region accounts for 2.4 % of all the migrants arriving in Russia in the recent years³, ranking fifth among other Russian regions.

Some ethnic communities in the Sverdlovsk region are predominantly formed by migrants. Ethnic, cultural, language-related, social and economic boundaries are particularly important for such communities and they are less prone to integration.

Data and Methods, Achieved Results

Indigenous ethnic communities are more inclined to shift their ethnic identities towards more integrative images: for example, this is the case with the Tatar and Bashkir communities in Sverdlovsk region.

In Nizhny Sergi area, which is a compact settlement of the Bashkir community, in 2002 in there were 554 people of Bashkir origin, which is 0.9 % of the whole population of this area (60,512). In Krasnoufimsk area, there were 298 Bashkirs; in Arti, 136⁴.

This is quite a small percentage taking into consideration that these areas are ancestral lands of the Bashkirs R. R. Asylguzhin, the Head of the Bashkir Historical Heritage Centre 'Shezhere' (Institute for the Humanities, the Republic of Bashkortostan), PhD in Philosophy, argues that the ethnic identity of this community has been undergoing a deformation.

³ Analytical Survey on the Migration Situation and the Implementation of the State Migration Policy by the Russian Migration Service in Sverdlovsk Region in 2014. Ekaterinburg, 2015. Retrieved from: <http://ufms-ural.ru/ufms/sistemy/statistika/> (date of access: 19.08.2015).

⁴ Asylguzhin, R. (2009). Bashkiry Sverdlovskoy oblasti [Bashkirs in Sverdlovsk region]. Vatandash yanvar [Vatandash. January]. Retrieved from: <http://www.vatandash.ru/index.php?article=1766> (date of access 09.03.2012).

For example, in the 1926 census, residents of settlements Syzgi, Ozerki, Azigul, Arti-Shigiri, Akbash, Ufa-Shigiri, Arakay, Perepryazhka, and Shakur identified themselves as Bashkirs but since the late 1950s, as Tatars. The same process of transforming ethnic identity was observed among residents of settlements Gayna-Bysert, Kurgat, Urmikey, Bishkovo, Kuyankovo, Bitki, Ust-Bayak, and Ust-Bugalysh. In these areas this process had taken place earlier, by the mid-1920s.⁵

The ethnic identity of Bashkirs has been increasingly blurred in the last decades because they are living remotely from the main part of their ethnic community, surrounded by other ethnic groups, predominantly Russians and Tatars. Another reason is that the Tatar governing bodies in Kazan have taken a much more active stand in terms of cultural education than the Bashkir government in Ufa. The ethno-cultural closeness between Bashkirs and Tatars, language similarities, and common religion have facilitated this process.

Such changes of ethnic identity characterize other regional ethnic communities, not only in Sverdlovsk region. Discussing the results of the population censuses, D. D. Bogoyavlensky makes similar conclusions about other ethnic communities of the Russian Federation⁶. J. Watson [1, p. 35] points out the role of political and economic factors as well as specific interests of emerging ethnic communities. According to P.L. Van den Berghe, it is possible to manipulate ethnicity [2, p. 27]. B. Anderson [3] coins a concept of imagined communities to show that ethnicity can be socially constructed. According to V.A. Tishkov, ethnic identity (as well as the ethnos itself) is not just an 'absolute archetypal structure' but a process of adaptation of human communities to the changing living environment [4, p. 3].

These changes follow an undulating pattern.

If in the late twentieth century, the ethnic identity was prioritized, nowadays it has receded into the background. For instance, in 2002 the population of Sverdlovsk region was 4,486,214 people⁷. This is 280,000 people less than in 1990. At the same time, the census results showed a considerable increase in the number of ethnic groups. In 1989, the national census recorded 120 ethnic groups living in Middle Urals while according to the 2002 census, there were over 140 such groups.

The vast network of public organizations working in the sphere of interethnic relations is another sign of the growing ethnic consciousness.

In 2008, there were eighty officially registered ethno-cultural organizations in Sverdlovsk region. These included national and cultural autonomies (30 organizations), national and cultural associations, centres of national culture, and associations of fellow-countrymen.

These organizations started to be established in 1997: these were Jewish, Tatar, and German regional national and cultural autonomies. They were the pioneers of the national and cultural movement in the Sverdlovsk region dating back to 1989. They were followed by the Russian, Bashkir and Gypsy national and cultural autonomies, founded in 1998.

Most ethnic public organizations were created by the Tatars (23 organizations), Jews (16), Russian Germans (10), and Bashkirs (6). Such nationalities as the Russians, Ukrainians, Mari, Belarusians, Chuvashes, Azerbaijanis, Udmurts, Armenians, Tajiks, Chechens, Ingushes, Poles, Kazakhs, Gypsies, Greeks, Dagestanis, Assyrians, Koreans, Kyrgyz, and Yakuts are represented by one, two or three public organizations.

Although the absolute number of nationalities (ethnic groups) has risen, the 2010 census demonstrated that the share of ethnic minorities in the ethnic make-up of the region had dropped.

We can suppose that a part of the population representing ethnic minorities have started to identify themselves as Russians: according to the 2002 census, Russians accounted for 89.23 % (in 1989, 88.74 %, that is, in thirteen years their percentage grew by 0.58 %); according to the 2010 census, the share of Russians reached 90.6 % (a 1.28 % increase in eight years) while the proportion of Tatars, Ukrainians, and Bashkirs decreased.

Figure 2 demonstrates changes in the ratio of ethnic groups in the Sverdlovsk region according to the above-mentioned population censuses.

Furthermore, according to government experts, only forty public organizations working in the sphere of interethnic relations are now actually active, the rest exist only on paper.

⁵ Asylguzhin, R. (2009). Bashkiry Sverdlovskoy oblasti [Bashkirs in Sverdlovsk region]. *Vatandash yanvar* [Watandash. January]. Retrieved from: <http://www.vatandash.ru/index.php?article=1766> (date of access: 09.03.2012).

⁶ Bogoyavlenskiy, D. D. (2012). Perepis 2010: etnicheskiy srez [The census of 2010: Ethnic dimension]. *Demoskop Weekly*, 531–532. Retrieved from: <http://demoscope.ru/weekly/2012/0531/tema01.php> (date of access: 06.08.2015).

⁷ The Russian Census of 2002. Retrieved from: <http://www.perepis2002.ru/index.html?id=11> (date of access: 01.08.2015).

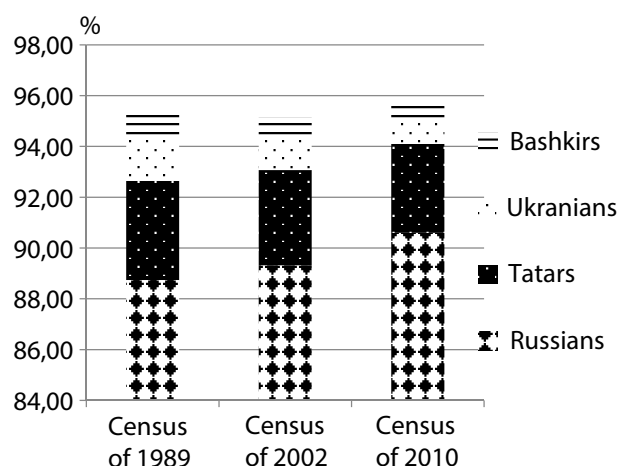


Fig.2. The ratio of the largest ethnic communities in Sverdlovsk region, according to the population censuses (%)

We have to agree with Y. V. Arutyunyan, who contended that 'at a certain stage of civilizational development, if it is real, integrative trends prevail, which implies that new interethnic or, to be more precise, 'supraethnic' communities will emerge. They will share similar or even the same cultural and social characteristics and eventually will share the same identity' [6, p. 42–43].

Thus, ethnic communities indigenous of Sverdlovsk region are now engaged in the formation of a common civil identity, which can be referred to as an integrated 'Russian nation'. This can be seen from the blurring of their ethnic identity and from the increasing share of the population identifying themselves as Russian. It can be predicted that interethnic tensions will subside for this category of ethnic communities because these groups no longer prioritize ethnicity.

Nevertheless, there is evidence of the growing interethnic tensions in the region: for example, in 2011, there was a violent clash between migrants and locals in the settlement of Sagra, near Ekaterinburg. There were also some protests against migrants in several towns in the region.

Favourable social and economic conditions in the region and its geographical location attract migrants from the neighbouring countries and beyond [7, p.165]. The increasing migration flow cannot but affect the situation in the region, which makes it necessary to take a closer look at the problems of migration and interethnic relations.

In the last five years about 80 % of the registered migrants have come to Sverdlovsk region from CIS countries. People from Central Asia account for about 70–85 % of the total number of migrants.

The main migrant flows traditionally consist of migrants from Uzbekistan (26.2 %), Tajikistan (26.6 %), the Kyrgyz Republic (12.7 %), Kazakhstan (4.3 %), and China (3.3 %)⁸. Figure 3 shows the ratio of migrants by their country of origin arriving in the Sverdlovsk region.

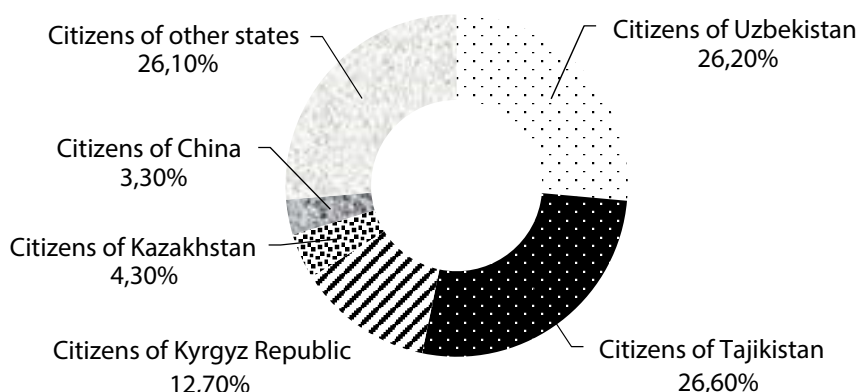


Fig. 3. Ratio of migrants by country of origin arriving in Sverdlovsk region in 2014

It can be predicted that this influx of migrants will continue in the future, even if the social and economic situation changes. According to L. L. Rybakovsky, these countries are highly likely to be donors of migrants for Russia: 'each country has its own migration potential and the countries which

⁸ Analytical Survey on the Migration Situation and the Implementation of the State Migration Policy by the Russian Migration Service in Sverdlovsk Region in 2014. Ekaterinburg, 2014. Retrieved from: <http://ufms-ural.ru/ufms/sistemy/statistika/> (date of access: 19.08.2015).

are historically connected with the host are most likely to be donors. These relations are based on the history of communication between the population of the donor country and the population of the host. The migration potential of Russia mainly depends on the post-Soviet states' [8, p. 25].

Although migration can help the host country or region satisfy its need in the workforce and alleviate the demographic crisis, it can also pose a social threat. The growing influx of migrants can contribute to the development of intolerant and hostile attitudes. International scholars argue that increasing migration causes a number of social and economic problems [9, p. 172].

Migrants generally prefer large cities, which have better conditions for their employment and a relatively stable level of social and economic development. In Sverdlovsk region, the cities and towns which attract most migrants are Ekaterinburg (accepts 54.4 % of all the migrants in the region), Nizhny Tagil, Pervouralsk and Kamensk-Uralsky, Sysert, Verkhnyaya Pyshma and Berezhovskiy urban districts.

One of the issues which causes a lot of public concern is hidden demographic expansion of foreign citizens. The 2010 census showed that the share of Tajiks, Uzbeks and Kyrgyz people in the population make-up of Sverdlovsk region had significantly grown compared with 2002 (for instance, the number of Tajiks increased from 6,125, or 0.14 %, to 11,138, that is, 0.28 % of the regional population).

Ekaterinburg has developed industry, which makes it the top migrant destination in the region. Furthermore, it has a good transport infrastructure and provides migrants with plenty of employment opportunities. The Hidden demographic expansion is particularly characteristic of Zheleznodorozhny and some other districts of this city. The growing influx of migrants is a source of anxiety for local residents and the Russian population already starts to treat some districts as unsuitable to live in.

To describe these trends we can use the term 'migrant-phobia' coined by the leading researcher of the Department of Ethnic Sociology of IS RAS I.M. Kuznetsov. 'Migrant-phobia' is rising due to the large-scale influx of migrants to Russian cities. People are afraid of losing control over their local living environment. He comes to the conclusion that Russian society is not ready to receive migrants.⁹

The influx of migrants with different ethnic background aggravates interethnic tensions. This problem is escalating because of the unrealistic expectations on the part of the newcomers and the lack of willingness to receive them on the part of the locals. According to L. M. Drobizheva, adaptation difficulties experienced by migrants clashed with the perceptions of the Russian majority, traumatized by the collapse of the Soviet Union, the development of national movements and the consequences of the Chechen war. Migrants from the former Soviet republics expected a warmer welcome because of the history of their common citizenship with Russian people. As a result, inhabitants of Russian regions started to perceive representatives of ethnic diasporas as enemies [10, p. 25].

The research data of various territorial, social and professional communities in Sverdlovsk region show that its population tends to perceive the influx of migrants as excessive.

For example, in 2011 we conducted a social survey¹⁰ covering three cities and towns of Sverdlovsk region (Ekaterinburg, Nizhny Tagil and Alapaevsk) by applying the methods of a questionnaire survey (708 people from 16 ethnic communities) and expert survey (10 experts in the sphere of interethnic relations). We asked our respondents to estimate the level of immigration to the region. 42.1 % of respondents claimed that there were too many migrants. 45.5 % were undecided; 10.9 % of respondents said that the number of immigrants was just enough; 1.5 % thought that there were not enough migrants.

Research centre 'Analitik' surveyed 400 civil activists, members of non-profit organizations and political parties in June 2015 and found that 73.7 % of respondents believed that there were 'many' migrants; 10.4 % said that there were 'not many' of them, 1.5 %, said that there were 'none', and 14.4 % were undecided.¹¹ V.I. Mukomel argues that 'the concentration of migrants in some Russian regions negatively affects their relationships with the local population. Furthermore, local inhabitants are hostile not only towards migrants from the former CIS countries but also the so-called 'visible minorities' from other Russian regions' [11, p. 69].

⁹ Kuznetsov, I. M. (2007, January 1–21). Integratsionnyy potentsial migrantov [Integration potential of migrants]. Demoskop Weekly, 271–272. Retrieved from: <http://www.demoscope.ru> (date of access 07.04.2012).

¹⁰ Karymova, L. S. (2012). Otnosheniya etnicheskikh obshchestv v usloviyakh stanovleniya grazhdanskogo obshchestva v sovremennoy Rossii (regionalnyy aspekt) [Relations of ethnic communities in terms of formation of civil society in modern Russia (regional aspect)]: the dissertation on competition of a scientific degree of the candidate of sociological Sciences. Ekaterinburg.

¹¹ Results of Survey of Civil Activists, Members of Non-Profit Organizations and Political Parties of Ekaterinburg. Centre 'Analitik', June 2015. Retrieved from: <http://civiluniversity.ru/file/77/87/7787f276-1beb-4b5d-8b43-c41487dc3137> (date of access 15.09.2015).

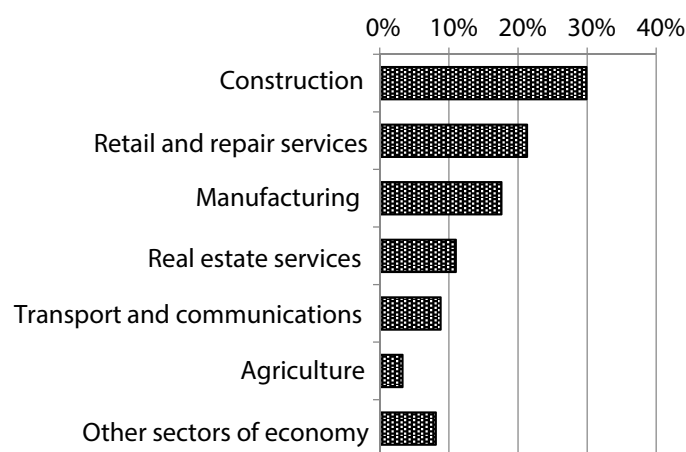


Fig. 4. Spheres with high demand for foreign workers in Sverdlovsk region in 2014

Ethnic conflicts are more likely to involve newcomers.

A certain role in the negative bias towards migrants is played by the structure of their employment, their social status and image.

The number and qualifications of migrants coming to Sverdlovsk region do not correspond to the demands and needs of the regional labour market. Introduction of quotas for migrant intake fails to regulate migration flows efficiently. For example, in 2014, 129,595 labour migrants arrived in Sverdlovsk region through 'Koltsovo' airport while the quota of work permits for foreign citizens in the region was set at the level of 40,487¹².

This situation results from loopholes in legislation, which allow employers to high foreign workers even if they have not submitted an application to do so and therefore have not taken part in the quota campaign. Migrants entering Russia under the non-visa regime often choose this or that region regardless of the availability of workplaces.

In the Sverdlovsk region migrants are mostly engaged in unskilled low-paid labour. Figure 4 shows the key spheres with high demand for foreign workers.

Over 90 % of migrants looking for jobs in the Sverdlovsk region are foreign citizens with incomplete or complete secondary education, without any specific field of specialization or profession and with bad or no command of the Russian language.

The vast majority of labour migrants are men (82.2 %). Most foreign workers in the Sverdlovsk region are aged 18 to 49 (92.2 %)¹³.

Labour migrants are subject to wage discrimination and their rights are often violated. Employers are not interested in regularization of labour migrants because by not doing so, they can avoid paying taxes and cannot be held responsible for their workers, for example, they do not have to provide them with accommodation.

Discrimination in the employment sphere causes discrimination of migrants on the mundane level.

For example, our survey has shown that in Alapaevsk, a small town in Sverdlovsk region, the number of migrants is the lowest and so is the level of racial discrimination. In Ekaterinburg, on the contrary, there are many migrants and the level of discrimination is the highest. Therefore, there should be a correlation between migration rates and discrimination because of all other population groups, migrants are most often subject to discrimination.

For example, only 7.3 % of respondents in Alapaevsk believe that in their town there is discrimination against ethnic minorities. In Ekaterinburg, this problem has been pointed out by 28 % of respondents. 33.1 % of respondents in Alapaevsk answered that there were too many migrants while in Ekaterinburg 47.8 % of respondents expressed such opinions.

As for the benefits of migration, respondents from different towns and cities said that migrants 'do the jobs which locals do not want' (32.8 %) and that migrants 'provide cheap workforce' (31.5 %).

¹² Analytical Survey on the Migration Situation and the Implementation of the State Migration Policy by the Russian Migration Service in Sverdlovsk Region in 2014. Ekaterinburg, 2015. Retrieved from: <http://ufms-ural.ru/ufms/sistemy/statistika/> (date of access: 19.08.2015).

¹³ Analytical Survey on the Migration Situation and the Implementation of the State Migration Policy by the Russian Migration Service in Sverdlovsk Region in 2012. Ekaterinburg, 2013. Retrieved from: <http://ufms-ural.ru/ufms/sistemy/statistika/> (date of access: 19.08.2015).

When asked to evaluate the negative effects of migration, respondents most often chose the answer 'migration leads to an escalation of crime' (28.5 %). A large proportion of respondents believed that migrants are disrespectful towards the local population and their traditions (19.8 %).

The survey conducted by the Institute of Development of Education in 2014¹⁴ demonstrated similar results: adult respondents highlighted the negative impact of migrants on the crime situation (48.4 % teachers; 32.7 % parents). Nevertheless, there is no statistical evidence supporting this opinion. Migrants do not significantly affect crime rates in the region, it is just a common misconception.

In order to analyze the ethno-cultural distance and the attitudes towards interethnic relations with migrants we conducted a questionnaire survey and found that our respondents were particularly unwilling to encounter Vietnamese and Chinese people in their towns. This might be explained by the existing interethnic boundaries, perceived absence of common historical roots and weak intercultural contacts. At the same time migration from the Asia-Pacific region, including China, to Russia tends to be on the increase [12, p.195].

Our respondents also demonstrated a hostile attitude towards migrants from the Caucasus, Azerbaijan and Armenia. Overall, almost a half of all respondents demonstrated their displeasure or irritation towards migrants belonging to the above-mentioned ethnic communities. Such negative bias can be explained by the history of violence and conflicts with ethnic groups from the Caucasus, for example, the Chechen war and terrorist attacks. Such negative stereotypes may aggravate antagonism and hostility.

Migrants from Central Asia were also perceived negatively by many respondents, although the majority claimed that they were indifferent towards migrants from these areas.

Over a half of the respondents demonstrated a welcoming attitude towards Russian migrants from former Soviet republics because they are the closest to the local population in terms of ethnicity and culture.

Thus, representatives of ethnic communities of Sverdlovsk region who took part in our survey were generally not ready to actively cooperate with other ethnic groups or to establish stable interethnic relations with them. This tendency is particularly characteristic of the ethnic majority in the region.

The distribution of answers shows that hostile attitudes towards migrants have a social and psychological nature and stem from the perceived cultural and social distance between the host community and migrants. Migrant communities are generally closed and separated from social, cultural, economic and other regional processes, which makes it impossible to form integrative images for this category of communities. What is needed here is a deliberate policy to integrate migrants into the host community. For example, Finland is known to have created the most favourable conditions for migrants, teaching them Finnish history, culture, cuisine and traditions [13, p.36]. A number of international studies emphasize the importance of social and psychological factors in interethnic tensions [14, 15].

According to government experts specializing on the national policy implementation, ethnic public organizations play a key role in the adaptation of labour and other migrants from the CIS countries. Let us take a closer look at this problem.

According to our survey, if respondents face a situation of ethnic discrimination, over 70 % would seek help from government authorities (49.6 % of them would go to the police) and less than 4 % would resort to civic institutions (3.6 %, to the national and cultural associations; 0.3 %, to other public organizations). Other respondents chose different options (18.4 % said that they would try to solve the problem themselves; 3 %, that they would resort to the press; 4.3 % chose 'Other').

The survey 'Social Monitoring and Analysis of Labour Migration from Tajikistan to Sverdlovsk region' was conducted by a non-profit organization 'International Information Centre' in collaboration with scholars from the Institute of Philosophy and Law, Ural Academy of Science, and the Ural State

¹⁴ This research used the methods of questionnaire survey and focused interview in 56 municipal units: in Ekaterinburg and other large, medium-size and small towns and settlements of Sverdlovsk region. The questionnaire survey covered 2,921 respondents, which included 1,565 senior school students, 844 parents, and 512 teachers. The interviews involved 16 school teachers. Results of the Social Survey of Social Tension Levels in Educational Environment of Sverdlovsk Region and Other Factors Contributing to Extremism. Ekaterinburg, Institute of Development of Education, 2014. Retrieved from: <http://gospatriotprogramma.ru/implementation-of-sectoral-and-regional-programmes-and-plans/meropriyatiya-programm-i/sverdlovskaya-oblast/otchet.php> (date of access: 07.08.2015).

University n.a. A.M. Gorky between November and December 2008¹⁵. It provided sufficient data on the role of ethnic public organizations by using the case of the Tajik ethnic community.

Only 3.3 % of Tajik migrants said that the Tajik diaspora really supported them and only 1.3 % of respondents had actually received such support. We can suppose that ties inside the diaspora are primarily based on family ties and therefore family ties prove to be the most efficient way of getting help.

The vast majority of respondents perceived Tajik communities as inaccessible and remote. 43 % of respondents claimed that they did not know anything about the Tajik diaspora but were more orientated towards using family and neighbourly social networks.

Therefore, the largest migrant community in Sverdlovsk region does not rely on civic institutions in terms of its adaptation, acculturation and assimilation into the host community.

Conclusion. Results and Recommendations

Interethnic relations in Sverdlovsk region are not homogeneous but have a complex structure and patterns of development. They are considerably affected by migration processes, which determine how ethnic communities adapt to the local social and cultural conditions and how they integrate into the social, economic, political and other relations in the region.

Thus, it is necessary to distinguish between the interethnic relations of traditional ethnic communities and those created by the newly formed migrant communities.

This is a challenging situation since neither the regional government nor the public are aware of it. Their efforts to harmonize interethnic relations are mainly targeted at the first category of ethnic communities and come down to the preservation and development of these ethnic cultures as a way of promoting tolerance.

These ethnic communities, however, have blurred ethnic identities and are now developing towards the formation of the common civil identity of the 'Russian' nation. Therefore, we can predict that since these groups are less concerned with their ethnic identity, they will be less prone to interethnic antagonism.

At the same time migrant communities are much more likely to get involved into interethnic conflicts because they prioritize their ethnic identity and also have to deal with a number of serious social, psychological, and economic challenges.

Migrants tend to choose large cities with more favourable labour conditions, which exacerbates the problem of hidden demographic expansion. Therefore, more active and efficient measures are needed to harmonize interethnic relations.

Negative bias towards migrants has a social and psychological nature and stems from pronounced cultural and social boundaries.

The host community's negative attitude towards migrants also depends on the structure of migrants' employment, their social status and image.

Migrants are discriminated in terms of wages, social and legal rights. Therefore, state authorities should take active measures to prevent discrimination and inequality and to legally regulate the process of labour migration.

Discrimination in the sphere of employment causes discrimination of migrants on the mundane level.

Ethnic tension between migrants and the local population inevitably starts to affect the relationships inside the host community: representatives of indigenous ethnic groups begin to treat with suspicion, disdain and caution not only the newcomers but also other indigenous ethnic communities.

In order to address this problem the government should take measures to reduce the distance between the cultures and ethnic groups by teaching migrants the basics of Russian language and culture and by providing them with at least basic social protection. The host community, in its turn, should be encouraged to find common grounds with migrant communities, both ethnically and culturally.

Further research in this field should be targeted at studying specific ethnic communities of migrants and their problems in the sphere of interethnic relations.

¹⁵ Social Monitoring and Analysis of Labour Migration from Tajikistan to Sverdlovsk Region. Retrieved from: <http://research-migration.narod.ru/> (date of access: 08.08.2015).

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Author

Lyubov Sabirdzyanovna Krestyanova — PhD in Sociology, Associate Professor, Department of Social Security, Institute of Physics and Technology, Ural Federal University named after the first President of Russia B. N. Yeltsin (100, Sheynkamana St., Ekaterinburg, 620144, Russian Federation; e-mail: gosslugashiy@yandex.ru).